

**To:** Enck, Judith[Enck.Judith@epa.gov]  
**From:** Meiburg, Stan  
**Sent:** Tue 2/2/2016 3:38:31 PM  
**Subject:** Re: News Clips (Hoosick Falls)

I thought you were on leave!! ☐

Sent from my iPhone

On Feb 2, 2016, at 9:27 AM, Enck, Judith <Enck.Judith@epa.gov> wrote:

**Subject: News Clips (Hoosick Falls)**

<image001.gif>

**Politico: Schumer: Saint-Gobain needs to disclose full extent of Hoosick Falls pollution**

By Scott Waldman

Feb. 1, 2016

ALBANY — The company suspected of tainting Hoosick Falls' drinking water supply with toxic chemicals should immediately disclose the full extent of the pollution it caused, U.S. Sen. Chuck Schumer said Monday.

Saint-Gobain, the company, should also work with the federal Environmental Protection Agency outside of the Superfund process to more quickly remediate the problem, Schumer told reporters after a luncheon speech to the New York State Association of Counties Monday in Albany.

Schumer said Saint-Gobain has indicated the perfluorooctanoic acid, or PFOA, pollution may have been from other sources, and was likely caused by a predecessor company that owned the factory before the France-based company bought it in 1999. The senator said regardless of the original source of the pollution, Saint-Gobain is responsible for the clean up, since it now owns the building at the center of the investigation.

“Saint-Gobain did this,” Schumer said. “They've got to first come clean as to what happened, where they put the stuff, and then work on a plan to quickly clean it up.”

In a letter to Schumer sent Monday, Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics CEO Thomas Kinisky said the company was “fully invested in the well-being of this village.” He requested a personal meeting with Schumer and wrote that Saint-Gobain, which is

Hoosick Falls' largest employer with 200 workers, will continue to cooperate with investigations and was funding alternative water sources, even though it had not yet been found liable.

"As you so rightly pointed out, neither your office nor Saint-Gobain can do this alone," he wrote. "We must be willing to work together, with full transparency from all government agencies, to review all studies, analyze all options and focus on the most important goal: to ensure the people of Hoosick Falls have a safe and healthy place to call home."

For decades, the Saint-Gobain factory in Hoosick Falls produced Teflon-coated materials that the EPA says may have polluted the village water supply with PFOA, which is used in non-stick cookware, stain-resistant carpets and packaging. PFOA has been linked to cancer and other serious health problems. The EPA is investigating whether that chemical may have seeped into village wells when workers cleaned smokestack filters and other equipment at the factory. Other factories in town may have also used the chemical, so its exact source has not yet been pinpointed.

The EPA is now considering designating Hoosick Falls as a federal Superfund site and has lowered the acceptable level of PFOA for residents to consume. Such a designation would require extensive mitigation and cost many millions of dollars. However, if the Saint-Gobain chooses to fight the designation, it would likely be dragged out for years in the courts, Schumer said. He said it's important taxpayers don't fit the bill for something they didn't cause.

"The federal government can cooperate with Saint-Gobain and get this done much quicker," he said. "The first thing they've got to do is come clean: we need to know exactly what was spilled, how much was spilled, where it was spilled, when it was spilled, and then there's got to be a plan to clean it up and they've got to pay for it."

The New York State Department of Health and the village administration have been criticized for a slow response to the crisis. State health officials assured residents for months that the water was safe to drink even though samples were well above safe federal PFOA limits. Village Mayor David Borge waited months to request outside federal assistance to help with the pollution after concerned citizens showed him private test results with high levels of contamination. Schumer declined to criticize either state or local officials and said he was not focusing on past actions.

"I'm not going to look back," he said. "I'm going to look forward."

Jimmy Vielkind contributed to this report.

Times Union

### **Schumer: Rapid action needed on Hoosick Falls water crisis**

Senator says French company has "got to do more" to ease concerns

By Larry Rulison

Published 9:26 pm, Monday, February 1, 2016

U.S. Sen. Charles E. Schumer on Monday continued to put pressure on Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics, the company believed to be at the center of the Hoosick Falls water contamination crisis.

Schumer was visiting Latham fuel cell manufacturer Plug Power to call for an extension of a 30 percent federal tax credit for fuel cell purchases.

But afterward, he used the stage to thank Dr. Marcus Martinez, a family doctor from Hoosick Falls who has become one of the outspoken voices of the crisis, blamed on the release of perfluorooctanoic acid, or PFOA, into the village's water system.

"It's great that there is an everyday hero that comes from the community that is looking after the patients," Schumer said.

Martinez witnessed high rates of cancer in the village and was himself diagnosed with the disease. He and others pushed village and state officials to do more to examine any links between PFOA contamination and the illnesses. The chemical, discovered last year in the village's water system, has been linked to kidney and testicular cancer, as well as thyroid diseases. A Saint-Gobain spokeswoman said the company ceased use of PFOA at its Hoosick Falls' manufacturing facilities in December 2014.

Media: Larry Rulison / Times Union Doctor was at center of Hoosick Falls water crisis

Schumer said more needs to be done by Saint-Gobain, which pledged to pay more than \$2 million to upgrade the village's water treatment plant with a filtration system that health officials said would remove PFOA from the drinking water. The company, owned by a large French conglomerate, is also providing free bottled water to village residents.

"They have not ducked it so far," Schumer noted, saying he was pleased so far with the company's response to the crisis. "That's good, but it's not enough. They've got to do more. Expressing sympathy and giving out filters is not enough. There's a cloud of fear and uncertainty hanging over Hoosick Falls."

Schumer's comments echoed those he made last week when he released a letter he wrote the company asking it to expedite the cleanup process.

"Hoosick Falls can't wait," Schumer said. "It needs answers and it needs action."

Martinez said afterward that figuring out how to clean up the village's water supply is a lot like helping a sick patient get better.

"We're looking for the company to be very transparent with all of this," Martinez said. "If they give us good history, we can make a diagnosis and fix the problem."

Photo: U.S. Sen. Charles Schumer meets with Dr. Marcus Martinez of Hoosick Falls,

left, on Monday after a press conference Schumer held at the headquarters of Plug Power in Latham. Schumer called on Saint-Gobain to expediate the flow of information in the Hoosick Falls water crisis investigation.

## **Gillibrand pushing for EPA to act on Hoosick Falls**

[poststar.com](http://poststar.com)

15 hours ago

BILL TOSCANO

Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-New York, is urging the Environmental Protection Agency to speed up its response to water contamination issues in Hoosick Falls.

Gillibrand sent a letter urging the agency to expedite its response and take immediate federal action to support and add to the state's ongoing efforts.

"I am extremely concerned by the presence of perfluorooctanoic acid in Hoosick Falls, given that studies have linked exposure to PFOA with increased detrimental health effects, including testicular and kidney cancer and thyroid disease," Gillibrand wrote in the letter.

She is a member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee.

Advertisement (1 of 1): 0:26

"The residents of Hoosick Falls deserve to know that every available resource at both the state and federal levels is being used to fully investigate the source of the PFOA contamination, and that aggressive steps are being taken by the EPA to identify the responsible parties and ensure that full remediation will occur," Gillibrand wrote.

The village, located in northern Rensselaer County, is home to approximately 3,400 residents. Perfluorooctanoic acid, commonly known as PFOA, has been discovered in the community's environment.

The contamination appears to be coming from a plant owned by Saint-Gobain, a French company that also has a plant in Granville.

Albany Business Review

## **Some Hoosick Falls homeowners installing filters to treat contaminated water**

Feb 2, 2016, 8:14am EST

Michael DeMasi Reporter

Some residents of Hoosick Falls, New York aren't waiting for the village to install a temporary system to remove a toxic contaminant from the water supply — they're paying to have filters installed at home.

The activated carbon systems, which one local supplier charges \$2,400 to install, remove perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), a chemical found in the village's water wells at levels considered hazardous by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The EPA is advising residents not to cook with or drink the water.

Meanwhile, U.S. Sen. Chuck Schumer on Monday urged Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics, the company whose Hoosick Falls plant is the suspected source of the contamination, to “do more” to help the village deal with the crisis. The company is paying for free bottled water, as well as a temporary and permanent filtration system.

A fact sheet by the EPA concerning PFOA says activated carbon filters, nanofiltration, and reverse osmosis units have been shown to remove the chemical from drinking water.

Gale Leva, owner of Denim & Deeds Real Estate on Main Street, is among a handful of people who bought an activated carbon system over the past two months from Culligan Water Co. of the Hudson Valley in Troy.

Leva, who has been drinking village water for 15 years, had the system installed a few weeks ago at the urging of one of her sons.

Two narrow, green tanks stand side-by-side in Leva's basement. Village water flows through the tanks before being distributed to the faucets of the century-old duplex Victorian where she lives and works.

Damian Constantine, sales manager at Culligan Water Co. of the Hudson Valley, said he doesn't sell the activated carbon system on the basis it removes PFOA.

"I can't make that claim," he said. "All we know is that's the treatment used in the past for this kind of contaminant."

It's up to Leva to test the water. Last week, she sent four samples to a laboratory in Pennsylvania — costing \$300 per bottle — and is waiting for the results.

She also installed a reverse-osmosis filter. It consists of four, foot-long cartridges with carbon filters that purify tap water. That system cost \$1,250, Constantine said.

"They wanted that to have further filtration," Constantine said, "so they could drink and feel confident."

Leva said having both systems may be overdoing it, but if the filters successfully remove PFOA from the water then they could help people who are trying to sell their home.

Given the difficulty sellers are facing now in Hoosick Falls -- "We have no calls for village properties," Leva said — the filtration could make homes marketable again. Buyers and sellers could split the cost for installation.

There are other costs involved with the filters. The activated carbon tanks have to be replaced at intervals, with each one costing about \$300. And, the cartridges in the reverse-osmosis system must be replaced.

"I've had a lot of conversations with people," Constantine said. "I don't say put this in and put all your worries at rest. I'm not 100 percent sure this would remove the contaminant down to the level that is safe."

The activated carbon water... The reverse-osmosis water... DONNA ABBOTT-VLAHOS

Gale Leva, broker/owner of Denim & Deeds Real Estate in Hoosick Falls, New York,  
DONNA ABBOTT-VLAHOS

NEWS CHANNEL 13

### **People sign up for blood testing, well testing in Hoosick Falls**

Anna Meiler

Created: 02/02/2016 1:01 AM

HOOSICK FALLS - People started signing up for blood testing and private well testing in Hoosick Falls Monday night.

Jane and Fred Verderosa were among the dozens of people who showed up. They want to know if the water they've been drinking from their private well in the Town of Hoosick for almost three decades is contaminated with a cancer-causing chemical called PFOA.

"I'd like to know if we've been exposed to it significantly or not. We have had health issues," said Jane Verderosa.

The EPA put out a statement last week advising all private well users to have their wells tested and to use bottled water for cooking and drinking if the level of PFOA exceeds 100 parts per trillion. The Department of Health says they'll test all private wells, but the Verderosas say that's not what they were told at the information session.

"They're starting to test on our road. He doesn't know if they'll get as far as we are," said Jane Verderosa. "We just would like to know what our situation is and I'm not alone. I have several neighbors equally concerned."

Louise Ciuk got test results last week, which showed trace amounts of PFOA in her well. But, she's not taking any chances.

"I'm not drinking the water because I don't think they really know what a safe level is. I just don't trust it," said Ciuk.

Right now a temporary system is being installed in the village to filter the PFOA out of the drinking water. The Department of Health will test the filtered water, but some people say they're hesitant to drink from the tap again.

"I'm not going to feel comfortable drinking that," said Catherine Dawson, a village resident.

A letter from the village says when the temporary filtration system is fully working the free bottled water program will end, leaving many people with private wells wondering what they should do next.

"I'm hoping by then someone will step up to the plate and tell us what to do," said Ciuk.

A spokesperson for the Department of Conservation tells NewsChannel 13 the state superfund will pay for filtration systems where needed, but it's not clear right now who would be eligible to receive that financial help.

The Department of Health will be holding information sessions at the Armory in Hoosick Falls three times a week for the foreseeable future.

Monday and Tuesday: 2 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Saturday: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

NEWS CHANNEL 13

### **Hoosick Falls helps students cope with anxiety about water contamination**

Kumi Tucker

Updated: 02/01/2016 11:30 PM

HOOSICK FALLS - The Hoosick Falls Central School District held a conference on mindful education, a new initiative that was introduced in September.

"Academic mindfulness is just giving our students an opportunity to understand that they influence and control what happens to them internally when faced with adversity," said Dean of Students Mario Torres.

School officials want to pull children into the process of discovery.

"When we do that and the children have the sense that I matter, I'm here because my teachers want me to be here, my parents want me to be here, I think then we have a totally different way of learning," said Dr. Gil Noam, director of the Program in Education, Afterschool and Resiliency (PEAR) at Harvard University. "We have learning where the kids say, I'm in! Right? Rather than I'm doing this because I'm told I have to do it."

In Hoosick Falls, they've incorporated meditative breathing in every grade, every day.

"The mindful breathing that we utilize has really been useful in helping kids just to become more settled and more centered and in touch with their feelings throughout the day, so that when they encounter different stressors, whether academic or social and emotional, they're able to handle it better," said elementary school principal Amy Netti.

The point is to be proactive, not reactive, and school officials say it's working. Total discipline incidents have dropped by 31 percent, compared to this time last year.

A major stressor these days is the water contamination in Hoosick Falls. Adults and children are concerned about PFOA, a cancer-causing chemical found in their drinking water.

School officials say academic mindfulness has helped, as students grapple with this community-wide issue and health concerns.

"And our kids have been very worried, as our community has been," said Hoosick Falls School Superintendent Kenneth Facin. "I think the things we've been doing at the school are designed to alleviate some of that anxiety."

It's a way to give students a voice, and to clear young minds in order to allow them to focus on what they're here to do -- learn.

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